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THE OBSERVATOR.

Of the Nightly Watch. Remarks thereon. Of the Portugueze *firing at ſome of our* Engliſh *Friggots. Of the Eſcape of* Mawgridge. *Of the Endeavours for Peace. Of the Affairs of* Sweden *and* Muſcovy.

From Saturday, January 25. to Wednesday, January 29. 170⅞.

Country-m. MAſter, if you pleaſe, let us have a medly Diſcourſe this Evening; I have a Power of Queſtions to aſk you, which if anſwer'd, may be of Advantage to my own, and the Information of the Publick.

Obſ. What we ſay, if it don't help the Publick, it won't hurt our ſelves: 'Tis better aiming at Good, than doing of Miſchief. What Queſtions ha'ſt thou in thy Budget?

Country-m. What was the Original of the *Nightly Watch?* And how was it manag'd in the Days of our Anceſtors?

Obſ. A *Nightly Watch* was eſtabliſh'd for ſeveral Reaſons of Safety and Security: The Villagers rather guarded their Flocks and Herds from the wild Beaſts, that raven'd by Night, than their Houſes. In Cities, a Watch was kept for Fear of Fire, that if it broke out in the Night, the Watch-men might awaken and alarm the Inhabitants; for in thoſe Ages of Simplicity and down-right Honeſty, Mankind liv'd upon the Latch, without Bolts, Bars, or Locks to their Doors; they fear'd no Thieves or Cut-throats, and had no Occaſion to light Home the *Quality*, that had drunk away their Knowledge, to their own Houſes.

But the Corruption of Mankind, made a Nightly Watch more uſeful; now every Man is forc'd to fortify his Houſe, and make it a Caſtle for the Preſervation of his Life and Eſtate, againſt Cut-throats and Robbers.

At firſt, every Man watch'd in his Turn, under the Command of the Conſtable; then by hiring a Perſon to watch in the Room of him that deſir'd to be excus'd: And at laſt, as now, by Perſons hir'd at the Charge of the Pariſhoners, aſſeſs'd by themſelves according to their ſeveral Qualities and Eſtates; but ſtill under the Command of the Conſtable, who has been immemorially call'd, *the King of the Night.*

But this good Appointment is ſtill lyable to Corruption, and is not minded by the People, as a Thing of the higheſt Conſequence, as indeed it is: They chuſe for Conſtables, Men of the meaneſt Rank, as Victuallers, *&c.* who, inſtead of clearing Houſes at early Hours, of drunken Company and Spendthrifts, entertain them themſelves, for their own Advantage; when as formerly, Conſtables were choſen from among the ſubſtantial Traders, who knew their Power, and how to execute it. And thus, by going out of the old Way, we are got into many new Grievances: No Man is ſecure of Life or Goods in the dead Time of the Night, when the Robbers, Shoplifts, and Burglars, ravage with leſs Oppoſition than the Beaſts of Prey did in the Days of our Anceſtors; to the Loſs of the Houſe Keeper, and the Gain of the Gallows.

Country-m. Maſter, a Gentleman at *London* told me, that he thought the Nightly Watch would be better regulated, if that Affair were left to the Management of the Juſtices.

Obſ. As how, *Roger?* Would that Gentleman have the Juſtices chuſe Conſtables, and aſſeſs the Pariſhes? Do'ſt think a whole Pariſh are not more proper to conſult of Ways and Means, and to provide for their own Safety, than two or three Men of that Pariſh, that are not of their own Election?

If there is a Curſe denounc'd in Scripture againſt ſuch as ſhall remove the ancient Land-Marks, he is much more entitled to a Curſe, who endeavours to remove the ancient Law-Marks, to deſtroy the good Cuſtoms and Uſages of our Anceſtors, thoſe noble Securities that have hitherto preſerv'd us from the Ambition of Princes, and the Deſigns of evil Men. He that talks of diminiſhing, curtailing, or deſtroying the Liberties of the People, by deſtroying the Power of the Conſtable, either he does not know what that Power is, or he is no *Engliſh*-man.

We are not to part with our Liberty, becauſe ſome particular Perſons make an ill Uſe of it. The Foundation of our Liberties, are ſo well laid, that we can't mend it. Our Conſtitution may want Repair, but it muſt not be pull'd down. It is entail'd upon Poſterity; it cannot be alienated, the Mannor-Houſe of our Freedom, muſt keep the ſame Foundation to thouſands of Generations, if they ſhall come.

Country-m. Maſter, this is right. My next Queſtion is: What do you think of the *Portugueze*, in firing upon ſome of our Friggots?

Obſ. I do think the *Portugueze* Commanders are no Conjurers; either the People that give 'em Inſtructions, don't know what they do, or the People that have 'em, don't underſtand, or can't read 'em. And, therefore, I adviſe 'em to ſtep aboard one of our Ships, and ſpeak to the Carpenter to make 'em a Stick we call a Loggerhead, which may ſerve well enough for a Feſcue to a *Portugueze* Commander.

In the next Place, I obſerve the *Portugueze* Gunners are no good Marks-men, who with fifty or threeſcore Shot could not ſtrike one of three Friggots; and do conclude, that had they a Fleet at Sea, we ſhould find 'em juſt ſuch Bravo's, as they are at Land.

And laſtly, I obſerve this is the ſecond Affront of this Kind given the Queen of *England*; and let 'em beware the third Time: And

do

do conclude upon the whole, that it may happen, upon Enquiry, to find some there in a *French* Interest.

Country-m. Now, Master, I must beg you to solve me this Question. What is become of *Mawgridge*, the Drummer, that murder'd Captain *Cope*?

Obs. There, *Roger*, thou hast put me to a Nonplus; could I answer that Question, I could get 50 Pounds by the Bargain. But from thy Question, I observe, that the Man was in the Right on't to save his Life, let it be by what Means soever, but of that Means I am no Judge, because I know nothing of it.

I observe further, that Murderers of late Years, have better Luck than many honester People.

As also, that it is high Time for his Jurymen (I say nothing to the Judge) to repent, that they did not stand to their Verdict which they gave in upon Oath, since all the Murders this Man shall commit at any time hereafter, must be laid to their Charge; for had he been hang'd, as he deserv'd, he could have no more committed Murder, as I am inform'd he attempted to do, since he was a Prisoner in the *Queen's-Bench*.

And I do hope, that Sir *John*, the Captain's Father, will do all that possibly can be done towards doing his Family and the Nation Justice in this Case, for it is a national, as well as a private Concern.

Country-m. Now, Master, I have one Question to ask you about the Peace? The Pope's Sons, the Popish Cantons, have written to their unholy Father to interpose in that Affair. What do you think of it?

Obs. Roger, I do say, that the Pope is the He-Whore of *Babylon*, let what Envoy soever say to the contrary, and that I'll no more take his Word, than the Oath of a Whore carted and whipp'd from *Newgate* to *Smithfield Bars*. He's much concern'd too at the Effusion of Christian Blood, but it is at that of his own Catholick Children; he has never spoke a Word to the Emperor about the Peace with the *Hungarians*, and only desires a Respit from War among the Catholick Princes, that the Emperor may be the more effectually enabled to extirpate the Protestants in *Hungary*, and *Transilvania*. *When the Popish Foxes preach, beware the Protestant Geese.*

For my Part, I wonder how the Confederated Powers have so long born with that Source of Iniquity, the Court of *Rome*, since it is plain ever since the War, it has been in the Interest, and has promoted the Designs of *France*. I have shown you wherein at several Times already. But certainly, *Europe* must be deaf to the Solicitations of those that have been its Bane, that have been the Cause of all its Misfortunes, the Bellows that have blown up the Flames of War, the Hurricanes, and Tempests of Discord: How comes it, that they now endeavour to hush, and quiet the Storm? These unnatural Appearances, rather move our Indignation, than our Speculation: But we may leave this Point, with this Observation: That those who sollicite for a Peace abroad, are near akin to those that desire it at home; for had we made Peace this Year, as some among us hop'd for, we had undone all that we have done already, with a dismal Prospect of playing the Game of War over again in a few Years, and that, perhaps, upon greater Disadvantages than we began it now.

'Tis well for *Europe*, that the Protestant Powers engag'd in the Confederacy, are so powerful, that without them, the Confederacy cannot subsist. The Protestant Powers owe no Submission to the See of *Rome*; they are not under the Influence or Direction of the Jesuits; they are clear from Bigotry, and being led by Enthusiastick Notions, but act for the common Good of *Europe*, upon the Principles of State-Policy, and not upon those of Religion.

However, if the religious Men will talk of a Peace, we will hear 'em, but the Proposals come from a wrong Quarter, from those that have occasion'd the most horrid Massacres, the most cruel Murders, the most bloody Wars, and greatest Confusions that ever afflicted Mankind; and if the Papists are so earnest, for the Sake of holy Church, to put an End to the War, 'tis the Concern of Protestant Princes to keep it on Foot, for the Sake of the Protestant Interest.

Country-m. Master, I have one Word more to say to you. What is your King of *Sweden* now a doing? The People stare at him as bad as ever.

Obs. Those that have no Eyes, stare most.

Country-m. That I think is what the Logicks or Somebody call a Paradox. How can a Man that has no Eyes, stare?

Obs. Those that have no Eyes of Understanding, stare most. All Men of Sense, and that had a true Respect for Honour, Honesty, and Integrity, never could have ill Apprehensions of the Actions of the King of *Sweden*. And now all *Europe* is satisfy'd of his Conduct, but such as desire otherwise than what may happen well for the common Good.

This Peace in the *North*, is the more surprizing, because it was concluded not in the common and lazy Way of Mediators; the Necessity of Affairs, requir'd a more vigorous Way of Proceeding; and let People judge what they will, the Thing is done, and promises well to the Confederacy.

If I am not mistaken, his warlike Preparations are against the *Czar*, a growing Enemy, and if not check'd in Time, may be a Plague to *Europe* as great as the *French* King has been; and this Piece of Service is a Thing of no small Consideration, and may prevent Evils in Time to come.

I pitty the Condition of poor *Poland*, that will be a well King'd Country; they have two Kings already, and 'tis said they are going to chuse a third. Much Good may it do them, this is entailing Confusion on their Posterity, making many Titles; either of which must be supported at the Peoples Expence.

Country-m. I have a great many other Questions to ask, but we'll break off at present, with a good Health to our noble Selves.

Advertisements.

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